

been an example of the standard that we set for our nation's high schools. Through hard work and dedication, the faculty have illustrated their commitment to building the leaders of tomorrow, and their success over the past 75 years serve as an inspiration to all educators.

I am proud to recognize St. Rose on its anniversary, and I look forward to another 75 years of quality education from this institution.●

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

● Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Hispanic Americans, as we begin to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. Events will occur throughout the Nation during this month—which extends from September 15th to October 15th—to applaud the achievements of Hispanics everywhere.

The diverse contributions of Hispanics to society, culture, academics, and the economy of our Nation have greatly enriched America. For example, the first two Hispanic Americans to win the Nobel Prize, biochemist Severo Ochoa and physicist Luis Alvarez, in their gain of worldwide acclaim, added to America's greatness in their respective fields. Dr. Ochoa of New York, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1959 for his discovery of ribonucleic acid (RNA). According to a New York Times article of November 3, 1993, Dr. Arthur Kornberg shared the Nobel Prize with Dr. Ochoa and said upon his death that Dr. Ochoa was "a fine teacher, a person of great enthusiasm and optimism." The Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded to Dr. Alvarez in 1968 for discovering a subatomic particle that can exist for only fraction of a second. He was born in California and later died in Berkeley, California in 1968.

Another great American, Franklin Chang-Diaz, became the first Hispanic American in space when he flew on a 1986 space shuttle Columbia mission. Ellen Ochoa became the first Hispanic female astronaut when NASA selected her for that duty in 1990, after receiving her Masters and Ph.D. degrees in electrical engineering from Stanford University. These Americans have presented themselves as ideal role models for other Hispanic Americans aspiring to excel in science and technical fields.

Our country's Armed Forces have also been proud to have Hispanics serve to protect America's freedom and liberty. The U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor Society has so far presented 38 Hispanic Americans with the distinguished Medal of Honor for their valor and great bravery. Without the integrity and spirit exemplified by these individuals, Americans everywhere would be facing a less secure world. Latinos have been with us through the Revolution, expansion to the West, and every conflict we have faced as a Nation; more than 400,000 Hispanics served the U.S. during World War II, and nearly 25,000 served during the Persian Gulf War.

The leadership of this country is augmented by the voices of our Hispanic elected officials, many who have joined forces in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. The Caucus has been working very hard to advance relevant legislation and educate their colleagues about the needs of the Hispanic community. As we review Congressional history, we discover that the first Latino to serve in Congress, Joseph Marion Hernández, entered our halls as a Delegate from Florida in 1822. Our body welcomed Octaviano Larrazolo as the first Hispanic U.S. Senator in 1928. Currently, I am honored to have the only Hispanic Chief of Staff in the U.S. Senate, my good friend Reynaldo Martinez. I feel that we should see more of these success stories as we reach the next millennium.

In the state of Nevada, Hispanics have shown their influence in all areas, especially in education, business, and politics. Nevada continues to be the fastest-growing state in the Nation, and Nevada's Hispanics have increased from 124,408 people out of 1.2 million in 1990, to 253,329 people out of 1.7 million in 1997, according to Census Bureau figures released last week. This is a large increase from 10.4 percent of the state population in 1990 to 15.1 percent in 1997.

Hispanics have been the largest minority in Nevada for years and will become the largest minority in the rest of the country in 2005. Overall in the U.S., Hispanics number more than 30 million people. Along with some of my colleagues, I worked to address urgent needs of this quickly growing segment of our U.S. population, forging inroads with various Hispanic organizations through our Senate Hispanic Working Group. The Working Group has met regularly throughout the past year, encouraging a two-way learning process in which we have come to better understand important concerns that Hispanic Americans have, while expressing to the Hispanic community our earnest desire to address these concerns. The group has forged ties with Hispanic organizations such as the National Council of La Raza, League of United Latin American Citizens, National Association of Latino Elected Officials, American GI Forum, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, National Latino Children's Institute and MANA A National Latina Organization. I am very pleased that our Leader, Senator DASCHLE, asked me to work with Senator BINGAMAN and Senator JOHN KERRY in this effort.

Practical, everyday issues Democrats have worked to address for Hispanic Americans are many in number and quite varied. For instance, we united to pass an amendment to the education IRA bill which I offered, along with my colleague from New Mexico, Senator BINGAMAN, to help reduce the alarming number of high school dropouts in this country. Although the amendment was added to the bill, it was regrettably stripped in conference.

This effort was particularly aimed at addressing the disproportionately high rate of Hispanic high school dropouts—a rate which has hovered at 30 percent. This is by far the highest rate compared to all other racial and ethnic minority groups—a rate that is simply unacceptable. Nevada has also seen dropout rates among Hispanics of more than 16 percent. We must continue to find out why these students are left behind, and eventually feel compelled to curtail their learning opportunities. These are opportunities that could help these disenfranchised young people begin a career, support their families now and in the future, and make something of their lives.

My own life was transformed by the power of education. My father never received an education higher than elementary school and my mother never graduated from high school. But because I was lucky enough to have access to educational opportunities, the support of good teachers, and a supportive community, I was able to accomplish what my parents had dreamed for me. Democrats want to make sure that every American has the opportunity to obtain a good education and realize their full potential.

We have also been trying very hard to reform our health care system. Millions of Americans worry every day about health care as they fight all manner of illness and disease, or care for a loved one who is sick. Many Americans, including Hispanic Americans who make up almost one in every four uninsured individuals in the U.S., wonder about how they will obtain the care they need when they need it, how they will pay for it, whether or not the care is quality care, and how much control they will have over their own health care decisions. We have managed to elevate on the national level one comprehensive solution to many families' health care worries in Patients' Bill of Rights legislation. We did this because people want to change the way managed care works, or more accurately, doesn't work. Regrettably, partisans have fought against full consideration of managed care reform in the Patients' Bill of Rights that would address issues at the heart of Americans' health care concerns. Democrats will continue pushing to increase patient protections for all Americans.

We have also, time after time, come to this floor to talk about strengthening retirement security for current and future generations. I hear our young people's anxiety about their retirement—that nothing will be available to help them when it's time to leave the workforce. Unfortunately for Hispanics, out of the one in ten who are part of the workforce, only one in three or 32 percent of the 13.2 million working Hispanic Americans participate in employee pension plans. The participation rate for other minorities is 44 percent and for white Americans, 51 percent. The situation is bleaker for Hispanic women, who earn on average

only 57 cents for every dollar earned by men and are thus unable to build savings or save for retirement.

Our solution is the Retirement Accessibility, Security, and Portability Act of 1998, a comprehensive pension bill that includes a wide range of proposals designed to help Americans prepare for a secure retirement. This legislation would expand pension coverage, strengthen pension security, promote pension portability, and increase equity for women. We are also working to save Social Security—a program that has succeeded in keeping millions of older Americans out of poverty, helping people who don't have pension plans or inadequate pensions, and serving as a necessary safety net. Americans shouldn't face great anxiety in their golden years and should rather be free to enjoy their grandchildren, second or third careers, and as active a lifestyle as they desire.

We have accomplished other things with the support of Hispanic Americans during this Congress, such as halting an assault on the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program. During Senate consideration of ISTEA II, the comprehensive highway funding bill, Democrats succeeded in protecting the DBE program which helps to ensure that minority- and women-owned small businesses have a fair opportunity to compete for Federal-aid highway and transit construction projects. In my state, \$26.6 million or 11 percent of 1997 contracting dollars coming into Nevada went to minority- and women-owned businesses. In 1996, the DBE program brought in \$4.2 million for minority-owned firms, or 7.3 percent of Federal contracting funds. It is imperative that we continue our diligence in helping these businesses fight against discrimination and flourish in their respective industries.

This year, we fought for a restoration of Food Stamps to legal immigrants who unfairly lost their benefits. As my colleagues recall, the Republican welfare bill in 1996 introduced several provisions harmful to legal immigrants, including a prohibition that cut 935,000 individuals from the Food Stamp program alone. Although eligibility later was restored in 1997 for certain immigrants in selected Federal assistance programs, many others remained ineligible for necessary benefits in the Federal safety net that helps poorer families. We included a partial, \$818 million restoration in the agricultural research bill conference report, defeating a motion to recommit the conference report with instructions stating that Food Stamp benefits be restored only to refugees and asylees who were lawfully residing in the U.S. on August 22, 1996. Immigrants were inequitably subjected to an arbitrary cutoff of benefits that hurt them dearly and took food out of the mouths of young children. We made sure that at least part of this injustice was reversed.

I hope that a similar range of issues will be addressed in a statewide His-

panic Leadership Summit—the second one in a series—which will take place in Nevada this October. The first Hispanic summit I helped arrange in 1997 served as a catalyst for discussions in issue forums on education, health care, crime and community health, business and employment, and political awareness, and this year's summit will spur discussion on the same issues. In addition to identifying Nevadans to serve in leadership roles for the community in these areas, summit participants proposed solutions to various problems, such as educational programs to address high school dropout rates, alternatives to gangs, improved adult education and bilingual education/English as a Second Language programs, and better access to higher education. I encourage my colleagues to hold events such as this one in their own states, as a way to further encourage solidarity and real progress as the Nevada summits did for the Hispanic community in my state.

Many accomplishments of Hispanic Americans came to light at the summit, and Hispanic Heritage Month presents us a terrific opportunity to celebrate those accomplishments once again. For example, as Hispanic consumers grow in number and purchasing power, producers, retailers and advertisers are recognizing Hispanics' strong economic muscle and finding selective marketing to Hispanics increasingly important. The Hispanic share of total buying power in my state grew from 6.4 percent in 1990 to 8.2 percent in 1997—an increase from \$1.38 billion to \$3.17 billion in less than a decade. Nationally, Hispanic buying power rose from 5.2 percent or \$210 billion in 1990 to 6.1 percent and \$348 billion in 1997, according to the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia. Hispanic Americans are helping to grow the economy.

Hispanic entrepreneurs are also becoming a significant force in Nevada's economy, and the U.S. as a whole. Nevada's 3,900 Hispanic-owned firms earned \$484 million in sales and receipts in 1992—double the number of firms existing in 1987 (1,767 businesses) and triple the sales and receipts logged in 1997 (\$142 million), according to the Census Bureau. As of 1996, there were an estimated greater than one million Hispanic-owned businesses in the U.S. Also growing in number around the country are Hispanic Chambers of Commerce—which numbered 169 in 31 states in 1995, according to Hispanic Business, Inc. This included the Latin Chamber of Commerce of Nevada in Las Vegas and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in Reno. I am encouraged to see that these businesses have come a long way and that they are projected to grow even more dramatically in the next five to ten years.

In closing, Hispanic Americans have much to celebrate this month. I feel there is no better occasion than now to personally congratulate a few winners who have made the Silver State quite

proud. The Latin Energy Dancers of Carson City, Nevada are being recognized this week by the National Latino Children's Institute—my warm congratulations go out to this group on being declared as one of the institute's La Promesa Award Winners 1998. Congratulations to Father Omar Botia for being this year's recipient of the Humanitarian of the Year "Adelante" Award. Father Omar, my friend, has contributed much to the Hispanic community in Reno, not only in the spiritual realm, but also in recognizing the need for improvement of their temporal situations. Also, MANA, A Latina Organization recently opened a new chapter in my state in Las Vegas—I wish them the best in their new endeavor. Let this month be a celebration for achievements and honors like these, through which the Hispanic community will continue to grow and flourish. Hispanic Heritage Month will be a time for us to remember the contributions that the Hispanic community has shared with us and has given to this, only adding to its greatness. We are reminded this month that the United States is a country of true diversity, which revels in the differences of its individuals, and rejoices in the common strains that unite us as Americans.●

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

● Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to the Latino community. As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, I want to recognize the contributions made by millions of Latinos in our nation. New Jersey is a truly multi-cultural state and I am honored to help represent this vigorous community in the United States Senate.

Mr. President, this month we celebrate a community with leadership which is notable in every facet of our society; which continually commits to family, education and business; and which is a vital force in our economy. Latinos have persevered, often under difficult situations, yet remain hopeful even as they strive for change. Hispanic elected officials and community leaders work to increase involvement in the electoral process, break the cycle of poverty and improve people's lives. Many Latino soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice in giving their lives for the common good of our country. Today, I want to honor these brave Americans and their families. And I also want to honor Latina/o heroes and heroines like the late Julia de Burgos, Arturo Alphonso Schomburg, Cesar Chavez, Roberto Clemente, Puerto Bibliophile and Don Pedro Albizu Campos among others. These teachers, advocates, athletes, and activists have brought pride to their community, enriched our country, and provided role models for all of us to emulate.

I commend the Latino community for its courage and persistence and